Steddineſs in RELIGION,

2031 *

Recommended from the

Example of *DANIEL*

Under the

Decree of *DARIUS*:

IN A

SERMON

MARCH 23. 17^{11}_{12}.

By THOMAS BRADBURY.

Pſal. XXXVII. 34. *Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he ſhall exalt thee to inherit the Land: when the Wicked are cut off, thou ſhalt ſee it.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

DAN. VI. 10.

Now when Daniel *knew that the Writing was ſign'd, he went into his Houſe: and his Windows being open in his Chamber towards* Jeruſalem, *he kneel'd upon his knees three times a day, and pray'd, and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime.*

YOU have here the great Example of a Man who ventur'd all his Intereſt in this World, to preſerve it in another; and run the hazard of *loſing his Life*, that he might *ſave it to Life eternal.* The Words conſiſt of two parts:

I. The Difficulty he was brought into, *when he knew that the Writing was ſign'd.*

II. His Behaviour upon it: *He went into his Houſe, and the Windows being open in his Chamber towards* Jeruſalem, *he kneel'd upon his knees three times a day, and pray'd, and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime.*

I. I will give you ſome few Thoughts of the Caſe it ſelf, that made his Duty ſo dangerous to him: And if you would fetch this from its Original, you'll find in it theſe two things;

The Honour that had been confer'd upon *Daniel*: And,
The Uneaſineſs that it gave ſome Great Men at that Court.

1. We are told of his Advancement: *It pleas'd* Darius *to ſet over the Kingdom an hundred and twenty Princes which ſhould be over the whole Kingdom, and over theſe three Preſidents, of whom* Daniel *was the firſt.* Where you ſee that King was unconfin'd in the Diſtribution of his Favours, and reſolv'd never to loſe the Service of an honeſt Man for the ſake of any Varieties in Religion. He underſtood his Intereſt better, and knew how to employ thoſe of Capacity and Faithfulneſs, whatever Opinion they might have different from his own. Herein hath the *Babylon* of the New Teſtament gone beyond that of the Old, in a Decree that *no Man ſhall buy or ſell, ſave he that hath the Mark or the Name of the Beaſt, or the Number of his Name.*

Ver. 1, 2.

Rev. xiii. 17.

The Reaſon of *Daniel*'s having this Place, ſhows how little Bigotry was concern'd in his Promotion. It was *that the King ſhould have damage in nothing: He was prefer'd above the Preſidents and Princes, becauſe an excellent Spirit was found in him, and the King thought to ſet him over the whole Realm.* Nor is it any wonder that *Darius* ſhould be ſo early with his Honours to this Great Man, if you do but conſider what a long Reputation he had poſſeſs'd in *Babylon.* He was prepar'd by as good an Education as *Nebuchadnezzar* could give him: *In all matters of Wiſdom and Underſtanding the King enquir'd of him,* and his Companions, *and found 'em ten times better than all the Magicians and Aſtrologers that were in his Realm.* When he unfolded that prophetick *Dream* about the *Golden Image,* it's ſaid, *Then the King made him a Great Man, and gave him many great Gifts, and made him Ruler over the whole Province of* Babylon, *and Chief of the Governours*

Ver. 3.

Ch. ii. 20.

Ch. ii. 48, 49.

nours of the Wiſe Men of Babylon; and he was plac'd *in the Gate of the King.* There he liv'd in ſo full Credit, that upon another occaſion *Nebuchadnezzar* ſays to him, *I know that the Spirit of the holy God is in thee, and that no Secret troubles thee.* Ch. iv. 9.

It is certain he had ſome publick Office in *Belſhazzar*'s time; for you read of a Viſion *in the third Year of the Reign of King* Belſhazzar, and he had it *in* Shuſhan *the Palace.* 'Tis likely, ſome Employment kept him there; but it is out of all doubt from what he ſaith at the end of it: *I* Daniel *fainted and was ſick certain days, and afterwards I roſe up, and did the King's buſineſs.* 'Tis probable he was afterwards out of Place, and ſeems determin'd againſt one by his Anſwer to the King; *Let thy Gifts be to thy ſelf, and thy Rewards to another.* *Belſhazzar* ſpeaks to him as one that had been a long while out of his preſence; *Art thou that* Daniel *which art of the Children of the Captivity of* Judah, *whom the King my Father brought out of* Jewry? *I have heard of thee, that the Spirit of the Gods is in thee, and that Light and Underſtanding and excellent Wiſdom is found in thee.* This looks as if he had been for ſome time laid aſide from Honour; but a very ſolemn Providence brought him in, to read *the Hand-writing on the Wall,* that confounded the Jeſt of *drinking Wine in the Veſſels of the Temple.* That King himſelf, who but a few hours before had all the Contempt in the world for the *Jewiſh* Religion, comes with an Awe to ſo great and good a Man as *Daniel: He is cloth'd with Scarlet, they put a Chain of Gold about his Neck,* and *Proclamation* is made concerning him, *that he ſhould be the third Ruler in the Kingdom.* Thus does God bring Men under a neceſſity of advancing the very Perſons whom they hate: *This Honour have all the Saints.* It lets us ſee, that Integrity carries its own Reputation, and will

Ch. viii. 1, 2.

Ver. 27.

Ch. v. 17.

Ver. 13.

Pſ. cxlix. 9.

make

make its way thro all the Slander of a Party. *Belſhazzar* had turn'd out *Daniel*, and now, at a great Feaſt, reſolv'd to be merry upon his Religion; but his laſt Work muſt be to reſtore him, for *that Night was* Belſhazzar *the King of the* Chaldeans *ſlain*. And as *Darius* the *Median took the Kingdom*, he knew it could not be put into better Hands, and therefore gave him the Office I have mention'd.

2. Here's the Uneaſineſs of the Preſidents and Princes: *They ſought to find occaſion againſt* Daniel *concerning the Kingdom, but they could find no Occaſion or Fault, foraſmuch as he was faithful, nor was there any Error or Fault found in him.*

Ver. 4.

This might be from the Deſire of getting into his Place: *Wrath is cruel, and Anger is outragious, but who can ſtand before Envy?* That's a Paſſion never to be conquer'd, becauſe it grows upon a Perſon's doing well. What need have good People to be looking out after a better World! *Solomon conſider'd all Travel, and every right Work, that for this a Man is envy'd of his Neighbour; this alſo is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.* How bitter an Imagination does it give us of Duty, or publick Zeal, to have it ſo ill receiv'd, that a Man's Uſefulneſs is his Guilt, and he ſhall provoke by all the meaſures he takes to oblige? But there is a State, where Obedience will ſit eaſier upon our ſelves, and thoſe about us; As *Lucifer, the Son of the Morning*, and his Companions, were the firſt Example of Envy in Heaven, ſo they are the laſt; no unquiet Temper comes there, but Satisfaction and Love circulate among them for ever.

Eccl. iv. 4.

Or, it may be, theſe Preſidents and Princes had a mind to be more at liberty than *Daniel*'s Inſpection would allow. They did not like the Integrity of a Man, whoſe Character anſwer'd his Condition, *that the King ſhould have damage in nothing*.

thing. The getting him turn'd out would give them an opportunity of revelling in *diſhoneſt Gain*; and, upon theſe Motives, they're in a general Deſign againſt him: *Then ſaid theſe Men,* Ver. 5. *We ſhall not find any occaſion againſt this* Daniel, *except we find it againſt him concerning the Law of his God.* He muſt be thrown out upon a Religious Teſt; which tho it was an Inſtance of their Wickedneſs, yet leaves an Honour upon him that was to ſuffer by it. 'Tis an Argument thoſe Perſons are blameleſs in their Office, whom nothing but a new Law can turn out of it. Thus it was here, they come to *Darius* with the uſual Compliment: *O King, live for ever! All the Princes of the* Ver. 6, 7, *Kingdom, the Governors, the Preſidents, the Counſel-* 8. *lors and the Captains have conſulted together, to eſtabliſh a Royal Statute, and to make a firm Decree, That whoſoever ſhall ask a Petition of any God or Man for thirty Days, ſave of thee O King, he ſhall be caſt into the Den of Lions. Now, O King, eſtabliſh the Decree, and ſign the Writing, that it be not chang'd, according to the Law of the* Medes *and* Perſians, *which alters not.* The Pretence of this was, that it would make for the King's Honour, and give him an Advantage of endearing himſelf to his new People: Thus was Loyalty a Cloke of Wickedneſs.

There ſeem to be two Parties in this Deſign:

1. They that acted by Malice and Envy. It was form'd in their Minds, and cover'd with all the Pretences of Duty and Zeal to the Throne; tho how void they were of that, you find by their inſulting the King afterwards, giving him no room for his Mercy, but reſolving to huff him with the Statute into which they had trick'd him: *Know, O King, that the Law of the* Medes *and* Ver. 15. Perſians *is, that no Decree or Statute which the King eſtabliſheth may be chang'd.*

2. There

2. There was another Party that consented to this woful Device, with more Inadvertency than Malice, and that was the King himself. One would wonder indeed that he should, upon any Views whatsoever, come into so ill a Design, or that the common Prudence and Conscience of a Man should not have kept him out of it; but there's an Inchantment goes along with Flattery, it is hard to believe it, and not to be stupify'd with it: *If a Ruler hearken to Lyes, all his Servants are wicked*; when they find his weak side, where he's most unguarded, they will ply him there.

Prov. xxix. 12.

That the King was drawn into this by a mere Error, appears from the honest unfeigned Pain that it gave him: *He was sore displeas'd with himself, and set his Heart on* Daniel *to deliver him; and he labour'd to the going down of the Sun to deliver him.* Thus does a hasty Resolution make work for a slow Repentance; but he was *ensnar'd with the Words of his Mouth.* And you may observe the Equity of Providence, that the Man who was so weak as to make this Bargain, is the first that feels the Mischief of it.

Ver. 14.

Now it's out of his Power to help the Person who had serv'd him best: He sees the Intrigue when it was too late; his Favourite, his Counsellor, and the greatest Friend of the Empire must be given up to the Lions. What a melancholy time this prov'd to *Darius*, you read: *He went to his Palace, and pass'd the Night in Fasting, neither were the Instruments of Musick brought before him, and his Sleep went from him. He arose early in the Morning, and went to the Den of Lions; when he came to the Den, he cry'd with a lamentable Voice unto* Daniel. Thus you see this Statute was agreed to by Persons of different Views; the Princes for their own Ends drew in the King to

Ver. 18, 19, 20.

sacri-

ſacrifice the moſt able and upright Counſellor in his Dominion.

How long this matter was depending, we cannot tell; the Scripture hath left us uncertain whether there was any diſtance between preſenting the Decree, and having it paſs into a Law. If it was a thing done haſtily, *Daniel* might not know of it, till it was too late to prevent it: if he had warning before-hand, and made his Application to the King againſt it, yet the Caſe is neglected by the Man that had ſo much reaſon to value him. However this was, yet we are ſure of that which is more our Concern; and that is,

II. His Behaviour upon it: *When he knew that the Writing was ſign'd, he went into his Houſe, and his Windows being open in his Chamber towards* Jeruſalem, *he kneel'd upon his knees three times a day, and pray'd, and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime.*

Here are ſome things to be explain'd before they come to be improv'd.

1. The Place of his Worſhip.
2. The Manner of it.
3. The Frequency.
4. The Matter it conſiſted of.
5. The Cuſtom he obſerv'd in it.

1. As to the Place of his worſhipping God, it was in *his own Houſe:* they had no other Temples in *Babylon*, and were a great way off from that City and Fabrick where God had fix'd his Name: But neither his Bleſſing nor their Duty was confin'd thither; as it was happily obſerv'd in the Conſecration of that Temple, that *the Heaven of Heavens could not contain him, how much leſs this Houſe?* He would be a God, a Friend, a Benefactor to his People, when they could not come thither.

And if *Daniel*'s Worſhip was accepted in a private Family during that Age, when the Holineſs of Places was allow'd; the Believer need be under no ſuſpence, now that all theſe ceremonial Doc-
Joh.iv.21. trines are laid aſide: for *neither in this Mountain, nor yet at* Jeruſalem *ſhall they worſhip the Father.* It is all one Where, provided the Work be carry'd
Acts xvii. 24. on *in Spirit and Truth: He dwells not in Temples made with hands.*

And then, beſides, you may obſerve, tho *Daniel* liv'd in a Houſe ſutable to his Quality, as being the chief Miniſter of State, yet he does not think it too good for a Courſe of Religion. He had other Cares upon him above thoſe of the Kingdom: wherever he is an Inhabitant, he will be a Supplicant.

2. The Manner of his Worſhip is very remarkable, that *his Windows were open'd in his Chamber towards* Jeruſalem. This was not to give his Enemies an advantage of ſeeing him; for it is no man's Duty to court his own Danger: nor was it any new thing, for it is ſaid that *he pray'd and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime.* And leaſt of all can we ſuppoſe, that he did it from any low Thoughts of the Divine Omniſcience or Favour, as if a Prayer was eaſier to be heard from an open Window, or went out under an advantage by being pointed to ſuch a Quarter: no, he knew that he had to deal with a God whoſe *Pre-*
Jer.xxiii. 24. *ſence fills the Heaven and the Earth,* and valu'd not which way his Eyes were turn'd. Not but that ſome of the *Jews* run headlong into this Vanity, as another Prophet of thoſe times acquaints us:
Ezek.viii. 16. *There were five and twenty Men between the Porch and the Altar, that were worſhipping with their Faces towards the Eaſt.* But as *Daniel* was above *theſe Abominations*, ſo he does not ſo much as fall in with their Ceremony: for *Jeruſalem* was almoſt full

full South from *Babylon*; ſo that his opening the Window that way muſt have another meaning, and ſeveral things offer themſelves in anſwer to it.

(1.) It was complying with the original Terms of the Conſecration: *Solomon* begg'd, *If thy People be carry'd away captive far or near, yet if they bethink themſelves, and make Supplication to thee in the Land of them that carry'd them away captive, and pray towards the Land which thou gaveſt to their Fathers, the City thou haſt choſen, and the Houſe that I have built for thy Name; then hear thou their Prayer and Supplication from Heaven thy Dwelling-place, and maintain their Cauſe.* Nay, before this, *David* ſaid, *I will worſhip towards thy holy Temple.* 1 Kings viii. 46, 47, 48, 49. Pſal. cxxxviii. 2.

(2.) It was to ſhow his Faith and Hope of the People's Return thither; according to that Direction of *Jeremy*, whoſe Writings *Daniel* was often peruſing: *Remember the Lord afar off, and let* Jeruſalem *come into your mind.* God had told them that he would *bring back their Captivity*, that *Jeruſalem ſhould be the Throne of the Lord:* tho it was for a long time without Inhabitant, yet *the Remnant ſhould return, even the Remnant to the mighty God.* He had call'd *Cyrus* his *Shepherd* and *Anointed* ſeveral Ages before he was born, becauſe in his Reign *the Foundation of the Temple ſhould be laid.* Perhaps here was a great deal to obſcure the Promiſe, no Dawn of that Felicity now: but yet he takes his daily Looks that way, under an Aſſurance that the Lord would *perform that good thing to the Houſe of* Iſrael. Jer. li. 50. Jer. iii. 17.

And as he believ'd it, ſo by this you ſee how heartily he wiſh'd for it; which ſhews us what an Amplitude of Zeal he had, and how much a Care for the publick Intereſt of Religion ſwallow'd up all that was due to himſelf. Why ſhould a Perſon in ſo much danger trouble his Thoughts about

the Return of a People? As he had not many hours to live, it ſeems to be a roving Meditation that leads him into a Concern for others: One would rather imagine he ſhould think of nothing elſe now beſides *the Den of Lions.* But as *Jeruſalem* was his *chiefeſt Joy* in Proſperity, ſo it is his deareſt Care in a time of Trouble. Tho he might beg for Mercies to himſelf, to be directed thro the Temptation, or deliver'd out of it, yet you ſee the Opening of his Heart, by that of his Window, is to *Jeruſalem the City of the Great King.*

(3.) There he knew that the *Meſſiah* was to come: *He of whom* Moſes *in the Law, and the Pro-*
Joh. i. 45. *phets did write.* Whether this matter happen'd before that *Prayer* of his in the ninth Chapter, I cannot tell: but it is plain that they could not be
Dan. ix. 1. far aſunder; for that was *in the firſt Year of* Darius, and therefore I think it not improbable that the Angel *Gabriel* might have appear'd to him before this Plot of the Princes took effect. And as in his Prayer he makes a very moving Enquiry about *the Temple that was deſolate,* the City that was burnt, and the People who groan'd under a long Captivity; ſo the Anſwer was, that *Jeruſalem ſhould be built,* and there *the* Meſſiah *be cut off, but not for himſelf:* So that he open'd his Window that way, *in hope of the Promiſe made of God unto*
Iſa. vi. 2. *their Fathers.* Iſaiah *had ſeen his Glory, and ſpake of him, that he ſhould ſit on a Throne high and lifted up, and his Train ſhould fill the Temple.* And if you take this Senſe of the words, it lets you ſee that good People in thoſe Ages came to God by a Mediator; their Religion was a *looking to Jeſus,* tho the *Light* did not *ſhine* out, as it does in our more *perfect Day.*

3. The Frequency of his Worſhip: *He kneel'd upon his knees three times a day.* The Scripture hath

hath hinted at this Circumſtance with a great deal of Variety: *It is good to ſhow forth his Loving-Kindneſs in the morning, and his Faithfulneſs every night.* Pſ. xcii. 2. *David* reſolves in one place, that *Evening, Morn, and Noon will I pray and cry aloud, and thou ſhalt hear my Voice:* lv. 17. in another place, *Seven times a day will I praiſe thee becauſe of thy righteous Judgments:* cxix. 164. and here *Daniel* does it *three times a day.* This ſhows him to be a Man like *Enoch* who *walk'd with God*, his general Life was under that Regulation. There is a being *in the fear of the Lord all the day long*; and from the Temper we ſhould have for this Duty, we are bid to *pray always*, and to *pray without ceaſing*. *Daniel* had found the good of this Method before; it was by his own Prayer, and the Concurrence of his Partners, that he obtain'd the Revelation of *the King's Secret*. Upon any ſolemn Turn of Affairs, he was fervent in this Duty: *When he underſtood by Books the number of the Years in which God would accompliſh the Deſolations of* Jeruſalem, he cloſes the Calculation with a Cry to Heaven, *I have ſet my Face to ſeek it with Faſting and Supplication, and Weeping and Aſhes.* Dan. ix. 1, 2. But beſides what he did upon theſe extraordinary Caſes, you find it was his uſual Buſineſs to *kneel three times a day.*

4. The Matter of his Worſhip, the Parts that it conſiſted of: *He pray'd, and gave thanks.* Here was work enough for Prayer, to be *deliver'd from the Ungodly*, and have his Soul brought out of all Adverſity: that Petition would have ſuited his Caſe, *Keep me from the Snare they have laid for me, and from the Grins of the Workers of Iniquity: let the Wicked fall into their own Nets, whilſt that I withal eſcape.* Pſal. cxl. 9, 10. But one would think that there could be no Praiſes, no *giving of thanks* expected from a Man on the brink of the Lions Den. But,

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As no Trouble can make the Believer miſerable, ſo none ſhould make him ſilent: He hath Mercies to own of a greater ſort than can be taken from him here. The loſing of Honour, Intereſt, and Life it ſelf, draws no ill Conſequence along with it upon Holineſs, Joy, and *the Inheritance reſerv'd in Heaven for us:* We may go thro the Fire, ſhouting in the proſpect of what comes after it. When Perſecution hath taken away all we can loſe, there is ſtill a Reſerve that will oblige us to eternal Praiſes.

5. The Cuſtom he obſerv'd. It was what he did aforetime; not an unuſual Heat that this new Danger had put him into: this was his way when he *ſate in the Gate of the King.* He came down from the Dignity of a Preſident to the Humility of a Petitioner. Greatneſs does not run away with his Thoughts and Time: tho he had the Accounts of an hundred and twenty Princes to ſettle, yet he vows to have Leiſure enough for his God: Thus *happy is the Man that fears always.*

From all which I may give you this Note, as the Senſe of the whole Story.

Doctr. That no Proſpect of Loſs or Danger ought to hinder a good Man in the Courſe of Duty that he owes to God. Nothing could be more perplexing than the Caſe before us; and therefore the Perſon that can find his way out of Religion, may have that Reproach left upon him that is given to the Prince of *Tyrus*; *Behold! thou art wiſer than* Daniel.

zek. viii. 3.

Here I muſt take a Method that's a little unuſual.

1. Give you ſome Particulars as the Foundation of this Truth.

2. Con-

2. Conſider the further Light we may have into it from this Story.

1. I might argue the Chriſtian's Obligation to *hold on the Profeſſion of his Faith* in the face of all Danger, from more Heads than either the Time will allow, or the Caſe does need; but you may take theſe three.

1*ſt*. This ſhows that your Religion is founded on no other Authority than a Divine one: 'Tis not often that the Church of Chriſt hath been eſtabliſh'd by Law; for as it never needs a Law to make it better, ſo it ſeldom hath one to make it ſafer. Your Duty is nothing elſe but a Homage paid to Him that hath made you, and *bought you with a Price*; and his bare Word is enough to claim it. Sometimes he will have this Principle ſet out in a good Light, when his People ſhow they underſtand an Obligation that no Commands of Men can diſſolve. His Providence hath wiſely order'd it in moſt Ages, that there ſhall be a claſhing between the Laws of God and Man. Theſe are times that put the brighteſt Honour upon Religion, and prove how it is founded upon a Will that is purely Divine; but if you ſuffer it to be chang'd upon any new face of Danger, it is plain you mean ſome other Authority, and *ſtay your ſelves upon him that ſmote you, rather than on the Lord, the Holy One of* Iſrael. Iſa. x. 20.

2*ly*. This alſo gives a Teſtimony to the Pleaſure and Benefit there is in ſerving God. When it is attended with the Grandure and Profits of this World, Satan can play his Accuſation againſt thoſe that profeſs it: *Does* Job *ſerve God for nought? Haſt not thou made a Hedg about him, ſo that his Subſtance is increas'd in the Land?*

Conſtantine did the Church of Chriſt more harm than ever *Diocleſian* did; for by the Loads of Revenue

venne and Titles he gave to the fawning Biſhops, he ſuck'd out the Love they had to one another under Perſecution; it was eaſier for them to agree in a Priſon than in a Palace. But

A Man that runs the hazard of loſing what is dear to him, rather than he will take any undue Liberties with his Conſcience, is a living Record to the World, *That truly God is good to* Iſrael, *to every upright-hearted one.* Here's Imployment, Honour, and the greateſt Article of Intereſt gone; but it's for the ſake of that which makes it richly worth my while to part with it. If I cannot have the Bleſſings of both Worlds, I'll make ſure of the better; and in all the Miſeries of a Deſert, *my Soul ſhall be ſatisfy'd as with Marrow and Fatneſs.*

Pſ. lxxiii. 1.

Pſ. lxiii. 5.

3*ly.* Theſe Troubles do but call you to uſe your Satisfaction in the Divine Providence. Do you believe that God governs the World? Tho it is what any one will readily grant, yet an Infidelity upon this Head is the moſt common of any. The Pſalmiſt found it ſo hard to poiſe himſelf with this Truth, *that his Steps were well nigh ſlipt, and his Feet almoſt gone.* Are you ſatisfy'd that Chriſt is *Head over all things to his Church*, that nothing happens but by his Permiſſion, and nothing but to your Advantage? Muſt there not be ſome uſe for your Faith in his Providence, as well as in his Promiſe? You depend upon him for another World, and ſo you muſt for a good Journy thro this: *This is our God for ever and ever, and he ſhall be our Guide until Death.*

Pſ. xviii. ult.

Here's now a Conteſt between my Duty and Intereſt; the former is plain to me, the latter's under a Cloud. Let me then take the ſurer ſide; I may better truſt Providence in a way of Duty than out of it: Withdrawing my ſelf from the Obedience

Obedience I owe to him, is caſting him off. And what? Shall I depend upon his Goodneſs to feed me, when I deny his Authority to rule me? And let me tell you, that

As God is never at a loſs to ſupply the wants of his People, ſo every Mercy that comes after ſuch a Reſignation hath a double Sweetneſs in it. He can revive my Honour, and *ſatisfy me with Bread*, tho Duty to him throws me out of the way of both. What Method he will take to do it, I cannot tell; but how much Beauty and Joy will there be in the thing it ſelf? Therefore *truſt in the Lord, and do good, ſo ſhalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed.* Pſ. xxxvii 3.

2. As an Application to what you have heard, I will conſider the Caſe of this Story under two Heads.

(1.) Lay before you ſome plauſible Objections that might have been rais'd againſt *Daniel*'s doing thus.

(2.) Tell the Conſequences of his Integrity.

(1.) No doubt of it but ſeveral, who had a Value for the Man, would perſuade him to keep out of the reach of this Law. As,

1. They might argue, That it was a great deal to loſe Life, and eſpecially in ſo diſhonourable a way: That tho it is true, what he did was plain Duty, yet in a Caſe ſo extreme God would be gracious; for he that *loves Mercy rather than Sacrifice*, hath allow'd his People to have Mercy on themſelves, rather than give up their Lives for a Sacrifice to others. Had it only been Diſgrace, or ſome lower Damage, then they would not have adviſ'd him; but certainly Life is a more ſolemn Poſſeſſion, than to be ſo eaſily parted with.

This could not ſhake his Integrity, he was far from deſpiſing Life, but he knew of a *Loving Kindneſs* that was tranſcendent to it; and if he could not have it conſiſtent with the Honour of the God that gave it, it is better loſt than kept. Or,

2. It might be objected, That this would have been a Loſs to the Publick. Here's a King well inclin'd to the *Jews*, and his Moderation drew the Hatred of an hundred and twenty Princes upon him. The Government is ſcarce well ſettled, *Daniel* ſeems to be the chief Security that it can have; and if he will not be perſuaded to keep his Life, all muſt fall into Confuſion. But,

He knew that God is never in that Diſtreſs for his own Cauſe, as to oblige any Man to take one wrong Step in order to promote it. 'Tis no Maxim in the Politicks that he gives us, to *do Evil that Good may come of it*. 'Tis enough that when his Providence opens a Door of being uſeful, his Grace makes us ſo; but when that Opportunity is gone, he hath deſign'd us for his Honour ſome other way. *Daniel* was as much an Ornament to his Religion in the Den of Lions, as he had been in the Palace; and brought more Glory to God by loſing his Place, than ever he cou'd have done by keeping it.

Rom. iii. 8.

3. They might urge, that this was only a Decree for thirty Days; and therefore it was but excuſing himſelf from his Duty ſo long, and he might return to it again without any Danger; and certainly it was worth his while to baffle the Project of a tricking Party. But,

He that knew not what might be *brought forth in a Day*, hath no mind to run any hazard for a Month. What if God had cut him off before the end of that time? tho he might die ſafely, yet

yet a good Man deſires to be *found ſo doing*, in the actual Courſe of his Duty. And beſides,

If this Project did not take, after the thirty Days, they would concert another; for their Buſineſs was not to honour the King, but to exclude *Daniel:* therefore he makes a ſtand at firſt, to ſhow they have nothing to do with his Conſcience. And ſuch an Example we have from the Apoſtle to the *Falſe Brethren, who came in privily to ſpy out the Liberty they had in Chriſt; to whom they gave place by Subjection, no, not for an Hour, that the Truth of the Goſpel might continue with them.* Gal. ii. 4, 5.

4. They might urge, That here was no expreſs Command for his praying ſo many times a day; and therefore it might be lawful to make ſome Omiſſions: That a neglect of Worſhip is not ſo bad, as running into Sin. This is not a Caſe ſo dangerous as the Decree of *Nebuchadnezzar*, that oblig'd them to *fall down before the Golden Image that he had ſet up.* Here was only a waving what the Extremity of the Danger would not allow. But,

He acts up to this Principle, that no human Authority can make any Limitations to his Duty; and if he would not loſe one Seaſon of Prayer to ſave his Life, it's a Reproach to thoſe who let every little Trifle come in the way of that Duty, and do not *continue therein with Perſeverance.*

5. If he would do it, they might adviſe him to uſe all the Secrecy that was poſſible. There were other Houſes more proper than his own, where the Enemies could not find him, and thus he might preſerve his Conſcience and Intereſt too. But,

He knew how much Honour it would bring to God, to make Religion a Condition of Life; that he will not have the one without the other:

therefore he goes where he us'd to do, into the place where he knew his Enemies would ſeek him.

Thus you ſee what *Daniel* had to conquer before he went to the Lions, and that no Perſuaſion of this kind could touch him: He receives the Sentence with more Temper than the King could give it. And that leads me to,

(2.) The Conſequence of this matter, which I will only mention in four Particulars.

1. His miraculous Preſervation: *God ſent his Angel, and cloſed the Mouths of the Lions*, as he himſelf tells the King. The Brutes in the Den were eaſier to him than thoſe in the Court: there goes more to the turning of a Politician than the muzzling of a Lion. What a Teſtimony did God then *give to the Word of his Grace?*

Here I expect it will be reply'd, *Daniel* was an extraordinary Man, one that had the Spirit of Prophecy; and it is no wonder if a Perſon who foreſaw his Deliverance ſhould venture into Danger: but I think it is very plain he had no aſſurance of his Eſcape. The three Men that talk'd to *Nebuchadnezzar*, ſeem'd to be under the Di-
Dan. iii. rection of ſome Hope; *Our God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us, yea and he will ſave us out of thy hands, O King!* but we find nothing of that in this other Caſe; unleſs you ſuppoſe *Darius* himſelf to be the Prophet, when he took his leave of
Ver. 16. him, *Thy God whom thou ſerveſt continually, he will deliver thee.*

If you ſay that Miracles are ceas'd, theſe things are not to be expected now; I do not ſee any Foundation in Scripture for that Opinion: we ought not to *limit the Holy one of* Iſrael. And, as he did this by the Care of an Angel, theſe continue *miniſtring Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation*, and are readier at their Office ſince Chriſt is got to a Place above

above them: for *when he brought again the first-begotten into the World, he said, Let all the Angels of God worship him.* Nor is this matter so much out of the way as we may imagine: we are directed to live by Faith, as the good People in all Ages have done; and tho it is not likely that our Names will be so famous as theirs, yet the Principle is the same. It was *by Faith that the Elders obtain'd a good Report*; and one of the Exploits that is recorded of it, is, that Faith hath *stopt the mouths of Lions.* Heb. xi.

2. The Punishment of his Enemies. The Lions, who were under a Restraint to *Daniel*, are at liberty when his Accusers were tumbled down; for *they brake their bones before they could reach the bottom of the Pit.* Here seems to be the Cry of common Justice against those Men. Tho very often when a bad Law is repeal'd, the Procurers of it may escape; yet *Darius* would have his Vindication in the Hearts of the whole Land, when he empty'd such a Court into such a Den: every Mouth admir'd the Sentence. Thus did God *plead the Cause of his Servants Reproach: The Lord is known by the Judgments that he executes, when the Wicked is snar'd with the Work of his own Hands.*

3. His own Advancement: he is restor'd to his Dignity again. So that you see the Believer serves a good Master: losing any thing for him is but putting it out to Usury; we receive in *this World an hundred fold, and in the World to come Life everlasting.* And how different is the figure that *Daniel* made upon his Restoration, from what it would have been had he evaded the Law? It might then have been said of him, Here's a Man that makes a noise about his Religion, but we now know the Rate of his Conscience, the Price that he will sell

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it at; he is more ſteddy to his Place than any thing elſe: This is an Inſinuation that the World will come into; it is but talking as Satan himſelf did againſt *Job*, *Put forth thy Hand, and touch his Bone and Fleſh, and he will curſe thee to thy face.* But,

Daniel hath it without any Reproach of that kind: Every one ſees him fit to be *ſet over the whole Realm*, and owns him the Man whom *the King* of Heaven and Earth *delighted to honour:* nor would there be any Objection againſt what he ſaith of himſelf, *My God hath ſent his Angel to ſhut the mouths of the Lions that they might not hurt me, becauſe before him Innocency was found in me, and alſo before thee, O King! have I done no hurt.*

4. It ended in the greater Advancement of Religion: Darius *wrote to all People, Nations, and Languages, and made a Decree, That in every Dominion of his Kingdom, Men ſhould tremble, and fear, before the God of* Daniel; *for he is the living God, and ſtedfaſt for ever, and his Kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroy'd, and his Dominion ſhall be even to the end: He delivers and reſcues, he works Signs and Wonders in Heaven and in Earth, who hath deliver'd* Daniel *from the Power of the Lions.* And doubtleſs this was dearer to the good Man than any other Benefits of his Eſcape.

Ver. 26, 27.

Such an Integrity ſtrikes the World with an Awe, to ſee that you are guided by a Principle, that they took for nothing elſe but Fancy. The great diſpute is between Earth and Heaven, which is better, and more deſerving of our Affections. Now, at ſuch a time, the Believer hath the caſting of the Scales left with him; and plainly ſhows that the Cauſe of God is never the worſe for

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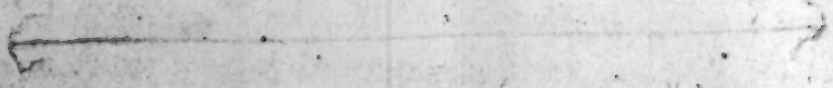
any Shame and Danger that goes along with it. And thus, *The Trial of his Faith, which was more precious than that of Gold that periſheth, will be found to Praiſe and Glory at the Coming of Jeſus Chriſt.*

FINIS.



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